

MOVEMENT, VOICE, CHARACTERIZATION, CONCEPTUALIZATION

by

Karla Huntsman and Tim Mendenhall

kkhuntsman 2@comcast.net tim.mendenhall@nebo.edu

Grade: 2-6 (Adaptation for K-1)

Lesson Focus: voice, movement, characterization, conceptualization skills

Length: unit lesson over several months (can be broken into short 20-50 min. segments)

Standards:

Practicing Drama: practice movement, vocal and characterization skills (transformation)

Contextualizing Drama: Students will explore meanings as they connect drama experiences with personal preferences, their world, and other times, places, cultures, and curricula.

Objective: Students will demonstrate their understanding of movement, voice, characterization and conceptualization skills through various activities and exercises, participation in a narrative mime, process drama, and creation of their own original work.

Content Indicators:

1. Students will be able to demonstrate large/small movements, fast/slow, expressive, and character movement.
2. Students will be able to demonstrate the vocal skills of volume (loud/soft), rate (fast, slow), pitch (high, low), pause, expressive and character voice.
3. Students will be able to use voice and movement qualities to create distinct characterizations in a narrative mime script.
4. Students will contextualize their knowledge of voice, movement, and characterization and apply it to issues of race, literacy, and individual worth
5. Students will be able to apply their understanding of voice, movement, characterization, and conceptualization in creating their own original work.

Process Indicators:

1. Students will focus and enthusiastically engage throughout the processes of experiencing, exploring, practicing, analyzing, creating, and mastery/service.
3. Students will engage physically, emotionally, intellectually, socially, aesthetically, and spiritually throughout the process of the lesson plan.

Materials:

1. Voices from The Wizard of Oz (can use other taped voices or teacher can have students imitate teacher's animated voice)
2. Eight 1/2" by 2" strips of poster board (2 or 3 per child)
3. Sheet of paper or overhead with these sentences:
"Please may I go? Pretty please with marshmallows on top?"
"What makes you think you can come inside? No colored people are allowed."
PUBLIC LIBRARY. ALL ARE WELCOME

4. *Goin' Somewhere Special* by Patricia McKissack and Jerry Pinkney. 2001. Simon and Schuster
5. Twelve Red Hot Process Drama Tools for More Effective and Exciting Teaching! (USOE website)
6. Expression in Storytelling or Choral Reading sheet (USOE website)
7. Voice Elements sheet (USOE website)
8. Stringing the Elements Exercise (USOE website)
9. Mendlshon Twins Exercise (USOE website)
10. Audition form (USOE website)
11. Character Movement (USOE website)
12. Character Analysis (USOE website)
13. Auditioning Children (USOE website)
14. Jeremy Whelan Tape Technique (USOE website)
15. Creating a Process Drama from Text (USOE website)
16. *Dramatizing Myths and Tales* by Louise Thistle. 1995. Dale Seymour Publications.
17. Anne Green Gilbert. Brain Dance (USOE website)

WARM-UP: Anne Green Gilbert's Brain Dance

EXPERIENCE/IDENTIFY:

1. Teacher tells a story which includes animated voice and body OR has a professional storyteller tell such a story to the class OR has students watch a film or play which illustrates animated voice and body.
2. Teacher: What did you notice about the voices and movement of storyteller, or characters in the play? Be specific. Were the movements big or small, fast, slow? Were the bodies curved or straight? What about the voices? Were they loud or soft? Fast or slow? High? Low? Did they have any specific qualities? Gruff? Smooth? Dramatic?
3. Teacher asks students to imitate the sounds and body movements of the characters in the presented story, play, movie (can be standing at their desks)
4. Teacher plays tape of *The Wizard of Oz* (OR uses another created tape, OR has them imitate a series of his/her own voices and movements) for further experience.

EXPLORE:

1. Teacher: Now let's experiment with all the things we can do with our voices. Teacher uses the class ideas and adds qualities they might have missed (See Voice Elements sheet and Expression in Storytelling or Choral Reading sheets on USOE website). (pitch, rate, volume, pause, rhythm, placement, qualities).
2. Teacher: What can we do with our bodies? (See Character Movement sheet in packet)
3. Teacher models the "Stringing the Elements Exercise" found on USOE website with one student. Break students into pairs and have them explore with each other.
4. Model the Mendlshon Twins Exercise (found on website) with one student. Break students into pairs and have them explore with each other.
5. Teacher: Now let's do the same thing with our bodies. Do both the "Stringing the Elements Exercise" and "Mendlshon Twins" Exercise with focus on the body

PRACTICE:

1. Read the story of “The Stinky Cheese Man” to the class.
2. Have the students practice being characters from “The Stinky Cheese Man.” You can break them into pairs, into small groups, or have half the class try unique vocal qualities and movement while the other half watches. (Director, Giant, Little Red Hen, Really Ugly Duckling, etc.)
3. Talk with the children about how each of the characters are different from each other in voice and movement.
4. Teacher: Transforming into another character is not just vocal and body movement. We also need to analyze a character in terms of background, personal, mental, emotional, social, intellectual characteristics, personality, wants, needs, and any other information that will help us understand the character better. Analyze characters as a group or individually (See Character Analysis sheet on website).
5. Tell the children they are going to produce a play and will be auditioning for the characters in “The Stinky Cheese Man.”
6. Set up the room with chairs in a semi-circular arrangement facing an audience area. Assign students to take parts of characters as you read through the the play the first time. (Choose good readers for narrator or major parts. Tell students you haven’t chosen these parts for the performance, but are just reading through it for the first time). As narrators read the play, have students feel free to move and react to other characters as they go through the play.
7. Have children write their top 3 choices for parts they’d like to audition for on an audition form (Sample form on USOE website).
8. Audition the children and cast the production (See website for Auditioning Children sheet). Be thorough and take time to clearly determine who is RIGHT for the characters in your show. About eighty percent of the success of the show is determined at the moment of casting. Also, children are much more comfortable in parts that are suited to their abilities and interests.
9. Rehearse the show. Create costume pieces (See Dramatizing Myths and Tales by Louise Thistle for suggestions). Narrative Mime is done with VERY minimal costumes (a headband with feathers to suggest a bird character, for example)
10. Perform for parents or for another class.

ANALYZE/CONNECT

1. Tell the students that since they have now had some experiences and practice with voice, body, and characterization that they are ready to go deeper in understanding how voice and body connect with characterization and help to create meaning in a story and in life. They will do a process drama based on the story of *Goin' Somewhere Special* by Patricia McKissack and Jerry Pinkney.
2. Have students write (or draw) on a piece of paper someplace they like to go that is special to them and write one sentence explaining WHY. Tell them you are going to share a story about someone who had a very special place she liked to go to. During the telling of the story, they will be participating during certain parts to help them understand voice, movement, character, and meaning.
3. Read/tell to: "hold y' head up and act like you b'long to somebody."
4. QUESTIONS: Make 3 columns on the board and have students analyze what they know about Tricia Ann and this story so far, what they think they know, and what they would like to know.

WHAT I KNOW

WHAT I THINK I KNOW

WHAT I WANT TO
KNOW

5. Read./tell to: ...The girl squared her shoulders, walked to the back, and took a seat behind the Jim Crow sign that said: COLORED SECTION.
6. QUESTIONS: Now, what have you learned about Tricia Ann or this story? When do you think this story took place? (Explain as much as needed regarding the racial situation of the 1950s). Add information to the 3 columns on the board.
7. IMPROVISATION:
Read/tell to: "No, but that's the way it is, honey," said Mrs. Grannell.
Teacher: Let's pretend WE are the people on this bus. The white people are allowed to sit in the front. There are lots of empty seats. Black people are crowded into the back. Many do not have seats and have to stand or sit in the aisle. (Have students take their places on the bus). Think about who you are in this improvisation. Are you a child? A mother with several children? A wealthy man going to work? What does your voice sound like? How do you move? What does your character look like? feel like? Now, FREEZE this picture. When I tap you on the shoulder, speak out loud your thoughts about this situation.
8. DISCUSSION: Have students sit in a circle. Teacher: What do you think about the fact that the white people sat in the front and the black people were crowded into the back? Can you think of any situations today that are similar? Does this seem right to you?

9. MOVEMENT:

Read/tell to: ...Holding her hat, Tricia Ann leaned back as far as she could to see Peace Fountain's magnificent water show. It made her dizzy to watch the sprays that shot high into the air, but she liked the feeling and turned 'round and 'round with her arms outstretched."

Teacher: Let's re-create this Peace Fountain. Who would like to be the fountain and the water? Who would like to be Tricia Ann? We can have several people be Tricia Ann. How does the water move? What is Tricia Ann feeling? How does she move? (could play music that correlates to the movement and feelings) What might she be thinking?

10. DISCUSSION:

Read/tell to: The light changed and 'Tricia Ann carefully started across the street.

"Don't let those signs steal yo' happiness," Jimmy Lee called after her.

'Tricia Ann's sign that made her unhappy said "For Whites Only." Sometimes people tell us things, or write things on pieces of paper that make us unhappy and are like the sign that made Tricia unhappy. Can you think of any "signs" or words that you've heard people say to each other or to you that are like this sign? Discuss.

11. DISCUSSION:

Read/tell to: 'Tricia Ann pulled her shoulders back and fixed her thoughts on being inside that warm and welcome place where there were no signs."

Teacher: Where do you think this Special Place is that Tricia is thinking about?

Let's write your guesses on the board. (Write SPECIAL PLACE on the board with their answers underneath).

12. ROLE ON THE WALL:

Teacher: Now, I'd like one of you to lie down on this butcher paper. Trace the outline of the student's body and hang on the wall.

Read/tell to: . "Mr. John Willis always said the nicest things."

Teacher: We've talked about some of the things people have said to us or to others that make us unhappy. Now let's think about some of the "nicest" things people have said to you or to others. I'm going to give you each some strips of poster board. I'd like you to think of things that someone could say to you that would make you feel good. What tone of voice would they be using when they said these things to you?

13. IMAGINATION: :

Read/tell to: ... "Now, there she was—smack in the middle of the Southland Hotel's grand lobby."

Have students lie down on the floor and visualize a "Grand" hall. What does the lobby look like? What are the sounds in the Hall. What do the people there sound like? How do they move? Have them phrase their responses with "I see...." "I hear...." Teacher: How do you think Tricia Ann felt being in that grand hall?

14. IMPROVISATION

Let's create this scene. There are people crowded into the hall. They are all white people, well-dressed. They are talking and laughing with one another.
(Have students create the scene).

Read/tell to: "The manager pushed his way to the front of the crowd."

Who would like to read what he said from our overheard? (or have one student pre-assigned to read)

"What makes you think you can come inside? No colored people are allowed!"

What do you think his face looked like? What did his voice sound like? What was his movement like? What do you think he was thinking?

15. HOT SEATING

Teacher: I'm going to pretend to be the manager and allow you to ask me questions about this situation. You can ask me whatever you want. (Teacher reflects the attitudes of the 1950s in his/her answers).

16. IMPROVISATION/TEACHER IN ROLE

Let's have several of you experience what this must have felt like to Tricia Ann.

Who would like to see what this experience might have felt like? (As students volunteer, pick a hair or eye color or article of clothing they are wearing to focus on).

When I lower my hand, let's have you crowd around her and say things such as

"What is she doing in here? You can't come in here." Use the voices and movement you think those people might have had. I'll pretend to be the manager.

(As manager, say such things as "We don't allow blue-eyed people in here." or

"Nobody with red shirts here.")

Let several students have this experience. Then, have students sit in a circle afterward and talk about what they just experienced.

Teacher: Has anyone ever made fun of you because of the color of your hair? your skin? your ability to play ball or not? Has anyone ever told you couldn't play with them. You were not wanted? Have you ever told someone they weren't welcome?

What do you think that might have felt like? Does the color of skin or the ability to play ball or a musical instrument make you better or worse than anybody else?

17. DECISION ALLEY

Read/tell to: "Getting to Someplace Special isn't worth it," she sobbed. "I'm going home."

Teacher: Do you think she should keep trying to go to Someplace Special or to go home? Let's divide into two groups. One group will take the position that she should go home and not try anymore. The other group will take the position that she should keep going. (Number the students off into two groups. Have them stand facing each other.) Who would like to pretend to be Tricia Ann? (Pick a student) Have the student walk down the middle of the two lines while students on both sides try to convince her that their position is right. At the end of the "alley" have the child playing Tricia Ann tell what they've decided to do and why. DISCUSS.

Teacher: Let's find out what she did. Continue reading story.

18. IMAGINATION/WRITING:

Read/tell to: “You are somebody, a human being—no better, no worse than anybody else in this world. Getting’ someplace special is not an easy route. But don’t study on quittin’, just keep walking straight ahead—and you’ll make it.”

Teacher: Have you ever heard a “voice” in your head telling you that you could do something? Discuss. What did that voice sound like? What were the qualities of the voice? Let’s all close our eyes and see if we can imagine a voice in our heads, telling us something good about ourselves. Now, I’d like you to take a piece of paper and have this voice write a message to you. The voice may talk about your positive qualities, your abilities. It might give you encouragement. Let’s just see what the voice says.

Teacher: These are very important papers. I’d like you to tuck them away in some special place and whenever you’re feeling discouraged about something, pull them out and read what this voice has said.

19. DISCUSSION:

Read/Tell to: ...”When she looked at it, she didn’t feel angry or hurt, or embarrassed. “At last,” she whispered, “I’ve made it to Someplace Special.”

Teacher: Do you have any more ideas about what this special place is? Let’s write them on the board.

20. CHORAL READING:

Read/tell to: “Before bounding up the steps and through the front door,’Tricia Ann stopped to look up at the message chiseled in stone across the front facing:

Teacher: Let’s all read this together (This could be on Overheard or on a large sign that you pull out.)

PUBLIC LIBRARY: ALL ARE WELCOME

21. DISCUSS:

Teacher: Did this surprise you? Do you think the public library is someplace special? Why? Why was it so special to ‘Tricia Ann in the 1950s?

22. REFLECTION:

Teacher: Let’s think about the voices, movement, and characters in this story.

How did their voices, movements, and characters reflect what happened in the story?

23. JOURNAL

Have students journal their responses to the circumstances of Tricia Ann in the story.

RESEARCH/CREATE

Have students create their own scenes, narrative mimes, full plays which illustrate variations in voice, movement, and character on an issue which is meaningful to them.

MASTERY/SERVICE

Present rehearsed scenes, narrative mimes, full plays to other classes or to parents.

ASSESSMENT SUGGESTIONS:

1. Videotape the narrative mime and have students write evaluations of the voice, body, and characterization work.
2. Have students choose a character from a play, novel, or story and create a character using voice, body, and characterization tools.
3. Have students create stories to tell which will include voice, body, and characterization.
4. Have students watch a play or film not previously seen and identify specific aspects of voice, body, and characterization.

EXTENSIONS/ADAPTATIONS

1. Social Studies: Have students choose a historical character and create a narrative mime, play, or process drama using voice, body, and characterization.
2. Dance: Have students abstract the qualities of voice and body to create a dance about a certain character from the narrative mime, process drama, or story of their choice.
3. Music: Have students listen to various selections of music and determine how a character would move or speak to that kind of music.
4. Art: Select paintings which depict characters and have students create voice, movement, and characterization for the people in the paintings. Create scenes, process dramas, or plays from the paintings selected.
5. Pre-K/1: Choose a simple poem or story for students to use in all phases of the lesson plan.